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The Music Achievement Program: Designing a Violin Lesson Curriculum

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THE MUSIC ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM: DESIGNING A VIOLIN

LESSON CURRICULUM

By

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for
Graduation with Honors from the
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Thesis Summary

What is the biggest commitment you have ever made in your entire life? How about recalling the biggest commitment you made before you finished the first grade? Other than pledging to only eat candy for dinner for the rest of my life, at the age of six, I unknowingly committed to a challenging and unending pursuit: learning to play the violin. To be completely honest, I was not terribly interested in playing the instrument. However, my kindergarten-age sister was ecstatic to give it a go. So, my parents enrolled me in Suzuki lessons at my creative arts elementary school. Unlike many inspiring stories of famous musicians, I was clearly not drawn to the instrument by a particularly burning passion. In fact, for many years, I only continued playing because the violin was something dependable in my life; regardless of where we lived, how busy my parents were, et cetera, I could count on daily practicing and weekly lessons with a local teacher.

Fast forward almost ten years later: I was beginning to apply for undergraduate programs prior to completing my last semester in high school. At that point in time, I experienced an existential crisis—or at least as much of one as an eighteen-year-old can have. Even though I felt like I was expected to go to college, I had no clue what to study. I reflected on my life so far, and I saw that the violin was the one existing consistency. Thus, I rather whimsically decided to pursue a degree in Music Performance. Ironically, I suffered (and still do, to an extent) from extreme stage fright. I developed a severe anxiety—and borderline loathing—of performing for people. This negative mindset was not very effective for my degree program. As a result, I felt incredibly lost and simultaneously unable to communicate my growing unhappiness and anxiety about the decision I made for my college career. I continued asking myself, what am I going to do once I manage to finish this undergraduate degree?

In December 2016, a unique opportunity arose. I followed up with a colleague about possibly taking over her studio of violin and viola students at Freeway Music, a music lessons studio located in Columbia, South Carolina. I was incredibly nervous to take on such a huge responsibility, but I decided that I would benefit from the opportunity to experience teaching the violin. After the very first day, I fell in love. In fact, I fell in love with several things: my students, the violin, and Freeway Music to name a few. The motivation that I feel every day I go teach, the excitement I feel when planning my lessons, and the personal investment I have in each of my students exceeds any other commitment I have made in my life so far. I truly desire to continue improving myself as a musician and teacher to better serve my students.

Since beginning at Freeway Music a year and a half ago, the entire studio has worked to develop the Music Achievement Program (or MAP, for short). This

program establishes a template for teachers at Freeway to utilize in formulating their own teaching curriculum. Don Russo, a founder and owner of Freeway Music, shared his completed MAP program with me, which outlines the entire curriculum which he would use to begin teaching a guitar student. His MAP would guide the student through beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels of music training. Additional components of the MAP encourage his students to become involved in extra-musical activities such as gigs, option performances, and teaching opportunities. I believe the development of my own studio's MAP would be a huge step in challenging and improving myself as a violin teacher.

In this thesis project, I will present a finalized form of my MAP. Following the completion of this thesis project, I will incorporate the MAP in my lessons at Freeway Music. My goal for the MAP is to develop a curriculum that addresses the numerous elements of developing musicianship and violin technique. While a large portion of the MAP will cover specific technical concerns, I would also like to emphasize the non-musical skills and benefits which accompany learning how to play an instrument. The MAP will thus provide a framework from which I can approach the individual needs and development of each student I work with in my teaching career. I think it is an incredibly valuable thesis project because it will provide a product which I will, hopefully, use for many years to come.

Introduction

One of the long-term goals of instructors at Freeway Music is to develop a teaching curriculum, also known as the Music Achievement Program (or MAP for short), for their students. Each instructor will utilize the template, originally developed by Don Russo for his guitar studio. The curriculum template provides a framework for a progressive course of study suitable for absolute beginners to advanced players. The significance of the MAP is multi-faceted: first, the MAP clearly outlines expectations for the student and the instructor during private lessons. Thus, there is no confusion on what improvements are expected from the student as their lessons progress. Second, the MAP allows the teacher to determine objective skill sets, yet it also allows freedom for the instructor to determine the best teaching method in which to instruct the student. For example, two students may be learning the same individual skill from the MAP program. However, the instructor can utilize completely different teaching methods to master the skill depending on the student's interests, strengths, weaknesses, et cetera. Thirdly, the MAP provides each student with intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to continue improving on their instrument. Because the student has tangible evidence of their progress, they are more likely to remain challenged and engaged throughout the lesson process. Thus, the teacher can continue lessons with a consistent forward momentum. Because I felt strongly about the endeavor to create a workable MAP for my studio, I decided it would be the perfect subject for my thesis project. In this paper, I will demonstrate the process by which I developed the MAP for my own studio: particularly, I will outline the influences, research, and editing process which led to the completion of my finalized MAP.

Influences on MAP Curriculum

Personal Experience

As a violin student since the age of six onward, I found that my own personal experiences as a student greatly impacted my development of the MAP curriculum. The three major influences on my development included: Suzuki Method Training, Florence-Darlington Strings education, and high school music involvement with orchestra and private lessons.

I first began the violin as a Suzuki student at the Ashley River Creative Arts Magnet School in Charleston, South Carolina. Two major elements of the Suzuki Method experience which I have attempted to recreate in my MAP are: learning by rote as a beginning student (versus starting with learning how to read notes), and viewing music as a community experience rather than a solely individual experience.

Once I reached the age of twelve, I was no longer a strictly Suzuki student; this development was largely due to my move and enrollment in Starr Ward's violin studio and the Florence-Darlington Strings group. Rather than insisting on a solely Suzuki-based curriculum, Mrs. Ward combined several methodological approaches along with teaching the Suzuki books. She also framed our lessons around the multiple performance experiences she provided for her students in the community throughout the year. Thus, I was exposed quite early to performance preparation in addition to the expected technical skill-building in private lessons. As a result, I have attempted to incorporate Starr Ward's cumulative approach to teaching in my own MAP; I also tried to keep the performance aspect of musical development in mind.

The experience of high school orchestra while simultaneously attending private lessons was another significant personal experience which influenced my development of the MAP curriculum. As a high school student performing in an ensemble with numerous players who began learning their instrument in middle school through the ‘traditional’ method of teaching, I had unique insight in analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of my experiences versus those of my colleagues in terms of playing level. By having private instruction which solely focused on technique and solo repertoire, I recognized the value of having multiple instructional experiences. The individual lessons helped me improve my individual playing, while ensemble experience allowed me to become a better collaborative artist. I also developed an appreciation for the technical skill-building which enabled me to easily succeed in the graded, high school orchestra setting. However, the high school experience also helped my development in ensemble settings; through orchestra class, concert festival, solo & ensemble, Region Orchestra, and All-State Orchestra, I found that a balance between solo development and ensemble development is key to developing musicianship. Thus, I have attempted to frame the MAP to students who are playing in various combinations of groups and who come to the program with a variety of instructional backgrounds.

Experiential Study

Over the past several years, I attended educational workshops which developed my teaching style. First, the Paul Rolland String Pedagogy Workshop majorly impacted my perspective on the physical set-up of beginner students. The Paul Rolland approach does not particularly have a collection of graduated books or expected repertoire; instead, it is a framework for developing healthy playing technique regardless of the pieces and

level of the student. I appreciated the elements of Paul Rolland's teaching style which emphasized allowing the students to prepare for advanced technique early in their development. For example, the student learns how to hold the violin in playing position by placing their left hand over the A harmonic in approximately third or fourth position. This allows the student to adjust to the feeling of playing in higher positions, even if they are just starting on the instrument. Another example would be the introduction of fingerboard slides and taps to develop the motions needed to produce vibrato. Even though a beginning violin student would not likely learn vibrato for several years, early skill development establishes the framework necessary to encourage success later in the student's musical education.

In the summer of 2016, I also attended a two-week training session for Suzuki Unit One. At this training opportunity, I received several hours of instruction from James Hutchins, the instructor for Suzuki teacher trainers at the North Carolina Suzuki Institute. I observed multiple individual and group Suzuki lessons presented by experienced Suzuki teachers. The combination of lectures and observations was incredibly useful in providing tangible examples of the theories we discussed in our lectures. One of the most useful elements of this training experience was the detailed attention with which we covered all the pieces in Suzuki Book One. Since I began violin at a young age, it is difficult for me to recall the ways in which I was taught the 'basics' for playing the violin. Thus, teaching these beginner skills has been a source of anxiety for several years. We spent several hours reviewing each Suzuki Book One piece; this provided in-depth insight into the skills developed by each selection, as well as the nuances involved in teaching the various skills. Overall, the training experience improved my understanding of

developing a beginning student's technique, and it also helped me identify my expectations for myself and my students as they first begin learning how to play the violin.

Academic Research

In addition, I spent quite a bit of time researching different sources to compile the best curriculum for my MAP. For example, I read books on the teaching and playing methods of Shinichi Suzuki and Paul Rolland. These books provided a different perspective in comparison to the experiential workshops and training sessions I attended, as the books provide the most objective source of information regarding the philosophies of Suzuki and Rolland, respectively. I also researched several method books that are used in educating strings students. For example, I analyzed the Suzuki books that a student would use in their individual lessons. I also reviewed the series *Essential Elements for Strings*, another popular educational method that is frequently used in public school string education. By reading these different sources, I compared the approaches and synthesized the elements of each method which I felt would best suit my MAP curriculum.

MAP Curriculum

Overview

The purpose of the Music Achievement Program (MAP) is to represent the goals and expectations for students who choose to follow the MAP curriculum at Freeway Music. The essential elements of the MAP curriculum include five distinct levels of progression; I have personally clarified the levels to encompass the absolute beginner, advanced beginner, intermediate, advanced intermediate, and advanced violinist. The five levels delineate the expectations for each distinct playing ability, as defined within the curriculum. The levels are further divided into individual goals, also known as “milestones”. These “milestones” establish individual technical goals for the student to accomplish as they advance through a given level. Students who complete all the milestones of a single level are awarded a patch to demonstrate their accomplishment.

In addition to the five curriculum levels and associated milestones, there are also six categories of “Achievements” for students to pursue. These categories are: performance, creative, community, professional, repertoire, and attendance. The “Achievements” provide personal development opportunities for students outside the technical development on their instrument. The performance, community, and professional categories, for example, encourage the student to be involved with individuals and groups outside of the student-teacher dynamic emphasized in the MAP curriculum. The “Achievements” encourage students to cultivate skills in other vital areas of individual and personal development. The completion of a level is recognized by awarding the student with a certificate acknowledging their success.

In the following section, I will outline, in-depth, the various curriculum elements which are a part of my personal MAP milestones. For the general overview and visual representation of the MAP, please refer to the Photos section of the project (page 32). The outlines provided below are intended to guide a teacher through educating a student each individual milestone. They may also be used by a student and/or a parent to help clarify the expectations in executing a milestone.

Level 1 – White: Beginner Milestones

- Beginner Posture
 - Easy, marshmallow knees (no locking at the joint)
 - Tall tummy/tall stomach
 - Violinists tend to overarch their mid to low back, causing later pain and difficulty playing for long periods of time
 - Flexing the abdominal muscles to prevent the poked-out stomach
 - Even weight on the feet
 - No diva or teenager syndrome!
 - Aka leaning on one leg/locking one knee
 - Establishing awareness of left versus right side, location of the feet
 - Open torso
 - Establish the habit of opening the chest and preventing arms and shoulders from rolling inwards (habitual of violins to sink toward the chest and lead to rolled shoulders)
- Rest Position (demonstrate proficiency)
 - Left thumb on sticker of student's choice; four fingers wrap around the shoulder
 - Feet together during rest position, evenly distributed weight
 - Violin cradled under the right arm without letting left hand release
- Playing Position (demonstrate proficiency)
 - Left thumb on sticker of student's choice; four fingers wrap around the shoulder
 - Feet one easy step out, evenly distributed weight
 - Assisted and unassisted placement onto left shoulder
 - Violin scroll must point outward (90-degree angle from direction of feet, which should be naturally pointed in the same direction as the front of the body)
- Pizzicato
 - Correctly demonstrate the technique for pizzicato (thumb on corner of fingerboard, pluck with pointer finger)
 - Correctly demonstrate the technique for rest position pizzicato (hand around the bout of violin, pluck the string with thumb at the edge of fingerboard)
- Twinkle Rhythms
 - Pepperoni Pizza, Run Kitty Run Kitty, Strawberry Blueberry, Grandma Rides a motorcycle, Ele (shh) phant
 - Student first demonstrates ability to clap, sing, and speak variations with correct rhythm
 - Student then demonstrates ability to play them on open strings ONLY once the bow has been incorporated
- The Musical Alphabet
 - Understanding of the 7 letters of the musical alphabet out of 26 total letters

- Understanding that the musical alphabet starts over once we reach the letter G
- String Identification
 - E – A – D – G
 - Understanding the strings are five letters apart in the musical alphabet
 - Orienting G as the left-most string and E as the right-most string
- High vs. Low Pitch
 - Identifying which open string is higher or lower
 - Identifying the exact string being played by name (e, a, d, g)
- Bow Hold (demonstrate proficiency unassisted and assisted)
 - Fully assisted bow hold
 - Second knuckle, inside of the hand wrapping fingers around
 - Placing the thumb last
 - Unassisted bow hold (teacher holds the bow parallel to the ground, student places on their own)
 - Ring and middle finger wrap around the frog (the wood square)
 - First finger lays down above the middle finger (wherever the hand naturally falls)
 - Curved pinky; place “marshmallow pad” on the top of the stick
 - Curved thumb placed on the clip (the silver square)
- Parts of the Violin and Bow
 - Identify the following parts of the violin: scroll, pegs, pegbox, knut, fingerboard, neck, f-holes, bridge, fine tuners, tailpiece, chinrest, button
- Left Hand Technique (requires: first finger tape)
 - The magic x on the lowest/base knuckle of the pointer finger
 - Establishing contact point just below the first finger tape
 - Straight thumb across from the magic x (straight is required to prevent gripping with the thumb)
 - Table fingers
 - Student will demonstrate how all four fingers should be curved like tiny tables
 - Umbrella fingers
 - Use all 4 table fingers to make an umbrella over the fingerboard
 - Student must demonstrate ability to go from shoulder position to neck position on the violin, unassisted
- String Crossings
 - Rock the Baby Bows: student must demonstrate the right arm with squared shape)
 - Rock from the E to the A string without waking the baby (no sound/sliding)
 - Must not go past the G string level onto the wood of the violin; E string must be low enough to touch or nearly touch the torso
 - Demonstrate string crossing between adjacent strings (A-E, D-A, G-D)
 - Shh Shh
- First Finger, Left Hand
 - Demonstrate ability to tap the first finger exactly on the first finger tape

- Correctly Identify the first finger by either “first finger” or “pointer finger”
- See Saw
- Bow Directions
 - Effectively apply the twinkle rhythms/variations to bow directions
 - Down bow = down to the group; up bow = up to the sky
 - Air bow the twinkle rhythms
 - Up Like a Rocket
 - The Wheels on the Bus
 - Windshield Wipers
 - Bowing to the beat of a given song (twinkle variations)
- Straight Bow
 - Proficiency in opening and closing from the elbow
 - Apply this to the violin, on the string, with twinkle rhythms
 - Demonstrate ability to stay between first set of bow tapes
- Second Finger
 - Demonstrate ability to discern between 1 and 2; pointer and middle when prompted either verbally or visually
 - Mary Had a Little Lamb
- Finger Strength
 - In first position, student demonstrates proficiency in being able to pluck all four strings with the pinky curved
 - Student demonstrates tapping on the fingerboard with all four fingers curved

Level 2 – Blue: Advanced Beginner Milestones

- Third Finger
 - Understand the placement of the ring finger onto the “third finger tape”
 - Demonstrate ability to play a piece using all 3 left hand fingers
- Staff ID, pt. 1
 - Identify the following elements of the staff: staff, grand staff, treble clef, time signature, measures
 - Demonstrate understanding of F A C E, E G B D F patterns of lines and spaces
- Long Bows
 - Demonstrate proficiency with the “turtle bow” or “minute drill”: completing a timed down bow with a straight bow and good sound
 - Depending on the size of the violin and bow, here is an estimate of the amount of time for a student to hold a turtle bow:
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ = 15-20 seconds
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ = 30-35 seconds
 - $\frac{3}{4}$ = 45-50 seconds
 - $\frac{4}{4}$ = 60 minutes

- No crunching of the sound and minimal shaking and stopping of the sound on a down bow
- Non-Consecutive Fingers
 - Demonstrate proficiency in placing fingers out of consecutive order (piece: “Lightly Row”)
 - Demonstrate the blocking of fingers in patterns when larger numbers of fingers are used (for example, placing 1 & 2 down when playing the second finger)
- Note ID, pt. 1
 - Identify all the notes present on the violin finger board A and E string (including the sharp sign first, though no need for student to understand that in terms of function of a sharp or flat)
 - Identify all the notes on the lines and spaces of the staff, naturals ONLY
 - Demonstrate ability to play all A string notes from music notation
 - Demonstrate ability to play all open strings from music notation
- Step vs. Skip
 - Demonstrate understanding of a step versus skip in music notation (for example, B – C versus B – D)
 - Identify step versus skip in a song (Lightly Row)
- Tetrachords
 - Demonstrate understanding of the prefix “tetra-”: a pattern of four notes
 - Demonstrate understanding of the major tetrachord
 - Demonstrate understanding of the half step versus whole step (close versus far away)
- G, D, A Major Scale
 - Identify the combination of 2 tetrachords both visually in music notation and while playing
 - Correctly play all open string, one octave scales from rote
 - Correctly identify all notes on visual representation of the fingerboard
 - Correctly identify all notes in music notation; both letters and finger numbers
- Body Awareness
 - Demonstrate elements of beginner posture while performing all songs learned up to using the fourth finger
- Low 2
 - Demonstrate understanding of placement of low 2
 - Correctly identify C natural versus C sharp on the fingerboard (associate with low 2 versus high 2)
 - Correctly identify G natural versus G sharp on the fingerboard (associate with low 2 versus high 2)
- Upper Position Development, pt. 1
 - Demonstrate proficiency at slide-taps
 - Student gently slides arm up the finger board and taps the left side of the violin
 - Demonstrate proficiency at tapping pinky finger at a sticker placed on the A harmonic

- Finger Strength, pt. 2
 - “Pinky Pushup” challenge completion
 - 100 continuous taps of the fourth finger on fourth finger sticker, without collapsed knuckle
 - Pinky Plucks
 - 20 plucks EACH on the harmonic location, across all four strings
- Ear Training
 - Demonstrate ability to identify all open strings by ear
 - Demonstrate ability to identify a step versus skip by ear
- Tuning Identification
 - Demonstrate proficiency in hearing if the open string is too high or too low (tuned at least a half step apart)
- Rhythm
 - Demonstrate understanding of eighth, quarter, and sixteenth note values, and rests
- Dynamic Markings, pt. 1
 - Identify piano and forte in music notation
 - Effectively demonstrate both dynamics in a piece
 - Correctly give at least 3 ways to create dynamics with the bow
 - Bow speed
 - Bow amount
 - Bow weight

Level 3 – Red: Intermediate Milestones

- Warm-Up Routine
 - Successfully develop an individualized warm-up plan for each student
 - Arm, shoulder, back, chest stretches
 - Breathing exercises
 - Finger and palm stretches
- Note ID, pt. 2
 - Identify all natural pitches on the staff, including ledger lines that extend down to open G string in music notation
 - Identify all the notes present on the violin finger board D to E string (including the sharp sign first)
 - Demonstrate ability to play all G to E string notes from music notation
 - Demonstrate understanding of sharps and flats in relation to music notation and to fingerboard placement
- Bow Articulations
 - Demonstrate basic articulations, including: accents, staccato, tenuto
- High 3
 - Demonstrate understanding of the location of High 3 on the fingerboard
 - Demonstrate understanding of what letter the pitches are for High 3 on each string
- Sounding Point

- Identify 3 different contact points (bridge, middle, fingerboard)
 - Identify visually and aurally
 - Demonstrate ability to play an entire piece at each contact point
- Interval Training, pt. 1
 - Demonstrate understanding of identifying pitches by their numbers within the octave (1-7)
 - Demonstrate understanding in basic distance between pitches, i.e. a third apart, a fourth apart
- Dynamic Markings, pt. 2
 - Effectively demonstrate *pp* – *ff*
 - Demonstrate understanding of the mezzo dynamics
 - Effectively perform each dynamic within the context of a piece
- Double Stops, Open Strings
 - Effectively learn string levels to play open string double stops
 - Change strings and keep contact
 - Keep contact during the entirety of a bow
 - Demonstrate ability to lean into one string more (louder A, quieter E)
- Low 1
 - Effectively demonstrate the location of Low 1 on the fingerboard
 - Correctly Identify the lettered pitches on musical notation for Low 1, i.e. B-flat is low one on the A-string
 - Correctly play low 1 in a piece or scale
- Major/Minor Scale Theory
 - Correctly identify a major scale pattern via tetrachord and whole-half step patterns
 - Correctly identify a minor scale pattern via whole-half step pattern (natural minor ONLY)
- Finger Strength, pt. 3
 - Demonstrate ability to use stress ball for strengthening exercises
 - Squeezing the ball with the entire hand
 - Individually pressing each finger
 - Demonstrate ability to maintain curved fingers in first position as well as third position location
- 4th Finger
 - Effectively use 4th finger throughout an entire piece
- Upper Position Development. Pt. 2
 - Perform slide-taps and fingerboard slides without any hiccups in the motion
 - Effectively play harmonics on all strings; including a slide to the fourth finger harmonic
- Key Signatures
 - Correctly identify the order of sharps and flats in key signatures (ALL)
 - Correctly identify the major and minor scales up to 2 sharps, 2 flats
 - Demonstrate understanding of relative major/minor

- Beginning Shifting
 - Demonstrate proper shifting technique, third position shift (lift – ghost – place)
 - Slow shift
 - Quiet left hand
 - Landing exactly on the correct pitch
 - Demonstrate ability to shift with first finger into third position
- F, B-flat, E-flat Major Scale
 - Correctly perform all major scales with flats (up to 2 flats)
- One Octave Arpeggios
 - Demonstrate understanding of arpeggios as 1, 3, 5, 8 pattern
 - Effectively perform arpeggios without musical notation
 - Identify the two possible finger patterns (2-4, 1-3)

Level 4 – Gray: Advanced Intermediate Milestones

- Note ID, pt. 3
 - Identify all pitches on the staff, including ledger lines that extend down to open G string and C in third position on the E string
 - Identify all the notes present on the violin finger board G to E string (including the sharp signs and flat signs incorporated, as well as Low 1, Low 2, High 3)
 - Demonstrate ability to play all G to E string notes from music notation, into 3rd position, all strings
- Key Signatures > 2 Sharps/Flats
 - Identify all major and minor key signatures at sight
 - Differentiate between major and minor keys in a musical context
- Intermediate Shifting
 - Demonstrate mastery of shifting process; including shifting with first finger into 3rd position, all strings
 - Demonstrate ability to shift with second finger into 3rd position
- 2 Octave Major Scales
 - Demonstrate ability to construct a 2-octave major scale from rote
 - Demonstrate ability to write out an entire scale in 2 octaves
 - Perform 2-octave scales for the following: G, A Major
 - Barring the learning of third position, learn: D Major
 - Barring the learning of second position, learn: B Major
- Third Position
 - Demonstrate mastery of all 3rd position fingers across all strings
 - Refer to 2 octave major scales
- Second Position
 - Demonstrate mastery of all 3rd position fingers across all strings
 - Refer to 2 octave major scales
- Interval Training
 - Demonstrate mastery of all basic interval distances

- In music notation
 - On fingerboard pattern
 - Demonstrate understanding of perfect, major, and minor intervals
- One-Octave Minor Scale
 - Perform a one octave minor scale in natural, harmonic, and melodic forms
 - G minor, D minor, A minor
- Double Stops, 1 Stopped Pitch
 - Effectively demonstrate string levels
 - Change strings and keep contact
 - Keep contact during the entirety of a bow
 - Demonstrate ability to play 1, 2, and 3 fingers effectively with open string
 - Demonstrate ability to play unisons
- Fourth Position
 - Demonstrate understanding of fourth position shift
 - Effectively play D, A, E one octave scales in fourth position
- Vibrato, pt. 1
 - Demonstrate the difference between arm and wrist vibrato
 - Effectively produce vibrato in a scale on each finger, whole notes
 - Without 4th finger
 - With 4th finger
- Chordal Structures
 - Demonstrate understanding of the I chord and V chord
 - Apply chordal structure to creating arpeggios in various keys
- Musical Terms, pt. 1
 - Create a personal log of important music terms to define, based on what is present in each piece
- Sight-Reading Patterns
 - Begin identifying finger patterns in sight reading pieces
 - Tetrachords
 - Half versus whole steps
 - Non-consecutive fingers
 - Intervals as related to finger numbers/pitches
- Two-Octave Minor Scale
 - Perform a two-octave minor scale in first position
 - Perform a two-octave minor scale, including third position

Level 5 – Black: Advanced Milestones

- Musical Terms, pt. 2
 - Continue personal log of important music terms to define, based on what is present in each piece
- Advanced Shifting
 - Demonstrate mastery of shifting process; including shifting with first finger into 3rd position, all strings
 - Demonstrate ability to shift with second finger into 3rd position

- Demonstrate ability to shift with third finger into 3rd position
 - Demonstrate ability to shift with fourth finger into 3rd position
- 2 Octave Arpeggios
 - Perform any 2 octave arpeggios
 - MUST include: 1st, 2nd, and 3rd position, minimum
- Interval Training
 - Demonstrate mastery of all basic interval distances
 - In music notation
 - On fingerboard pattern
 - Demonstrate mastery of perfect, major, and minor intervals
 - Demonstrate understanding of augmented and diminished intervals
- Double Stops, 2 Stopped Pitches
 - Effectively demonstrate string levels
 - Change strings and keep contact
 - Keep contact during the entirety of a bow
 - Demonstrate ability to play 2 fingers simultaneously
 - Thirds
 - Sixths
 - Octaves
- >Fourth Position
 - Demonstrate mastery of fourth position shift
 - Demonstrate ability to shift from first, second, and third position to a position higher than fourth
- Vibrato, pt. 2
 - Effectively produce vibrato in a scale on each finger, whole notes
 - Effectively utilize wrist and arm vibrato throughout an entire piece
- Three Octave Major and Minor Scales
 - Perform all three-octave major and minor scales, music allowed
- 2 Octave Arpeggios
 - Perform any 3 octave arpeggios ranging up to 3 sharps/flats

Conclusion

In completing this senior thesis project, I believe I created something which will be of major significance for myself as a violin instructor going forward in teaching my violin studio at Freeway Music. I believe that other strings teachers, especially those just beginning their teaching career, may also find this MAP a useful resource in guiding their development of a curriculum for their students.

Throughout the process, I felt very motivated about this project because the MAP is becoming a major focal point of the Freeway Music program. The task of creating an entire curriculum for a music student seemed like a daunting challenge, especially considering how much precedence there is in the strings world. However, I have seen a handful of instructors at Freeway Music successfully create their own MAP for their students and how it positively impacted their studios. As a result, I am now the first strings instructor to create a MAP curriculum. I anticipate that other strings teachers at Freeway may choose to adapt my curriculum to their studios. Or, they will be inspired to strike out and create their own completely new MAP.

While this senior thesis project is considered a final product on paper, I do believe that the MAP I created will be a dynamic and ever-changing resource going forward as an instructor at Freeway Music. As students come into the studio with different needs, and as I improve my own abilities as a teacher, I expect there will be many changes and adaptations made to the MAP. However, this first fully developed curriculum is a major milestone itself, as it provides a solid basis for presenting who I am as a violin teacher. By having the MAP as a staple in my studio, I feel confident in my abilities as a teacher, and I believe I will only continue to grow and improve in the future.

Visuals

Level One – White: Beginner

Draft #1:

Left Hand

Bow Hold

Parts of Violin/Bow

First Finger

Second Finger

Third Finger

String Crossing, A-E

Bow Directions

Twinkle Variations

Straight Bow

String Identification

Sounding Point (3)

High vs. Low Pitch

Staff Identification

Posture Elements

Pizzicato

Finger Strength, pt. 1

Draft #2:

Beginner Posture

Rest Position

String Identification

High vs. Low Pitch

Bow Hold

Left Hand Tech.

First Finger

String Crossing, A-E

Bow Directions

Straight Bow

Second Finger

Parts of the Violin/Bow

Finger Strength, pt. 1

Twinkle Variations

Pizzicato

Staff Identification

Third Finger

Sounding Point

Draft #3:

Beginner Posture

Rest & Playing Position

Twinkle Rhythms

Musical Alphabet

String Identification

Hlgh vs. Low Pitch

Bow Hold

Parts of Violin & Bow

Left Hand Technique

String Crossings

First Finger, LH

Bow Directions

Straight Bow

Second Finger

Finger Strength, pt. 1

Pizzicato

Third Finger

Staff ID, pt. 1

Sounding Point

Draft #4:

Beginner Posture

Rest & Playing Position

Pizzicato

Twinkle Rhythms

Musical Alphabet

String Identification

Hlgh vs. Low Pitch

Bow Hold

Left Hand Technique

Parts of Violin & Bow

String Crossings

First Finger

Bow Directions

Straight Bow

Second Finger

Finger Strength, pt. 1

Level Two – Blue: Advanced Beginner

Draft #1:

Long Bows
Staccato
Legato
Dynamic Markings, pt. 1
String Crossing, G-E
Non-Consecutive Fingers
Step vs. Skip
Note ID, pt. 1
Tetrachords
G, D, A Major Scale
4th Finger
Body Awareness
Low 2
Upper Position Development, pt. 1
Finger Strength, pt. 2
Ear Training
Tuning Identification
Rhythm

Draft #2:

Twinkle Twinkle Little Star
String Crossings
Tuning, pt. 1
A, D, G Major Scales
Step vs. Skip
Long Bows
Non-Consecutive Fingers
Tempo Practice
Finger Strength, pt. 2
Upper Position Development
Note ID, pt. 1
Fourth Finger
Legato vs. Staccato
Dynamics, pt. 1
Tetrachords
Low 2
Low 1
Ear Training, pt. 1
Body Awareness, pt. 1

Draft #3:

Third Finger
Staff ID, pt. 1
Long Bows
Step vs. Skip
Non-Consecutive Fingers
Note ID, pt. 1
Tetrachords
G, D, A Major Scale
Body Awareness
Low 2
Upper Position Development, pt. 1
Finger Strength, pt. 2
Ear Training
Tuning Identification
Rhythm

Draft #4:

Third Finger
Staff ID, pt. 1
Long Bows
Non-Consecutive Fingers
Step vs. Skip
Note ID, pt. 1
Tetrachords
G, D, A Major Scale
Body Awareness
Low 2
Upper Position Development, pt. 1
Finger Strength, pt. 2
Ear Training
Tuning Identification
Rhythm
Dynamic Markings, pt. 1

Level Three – Red: Intermediate

Draft #1:

2 Octave G Major Scale
High 3
Double Stops, Open Strings
Interval Training
Vibrato
Dynamic Markings, pt. 2
Note ID, pt. 2
Upper Position Development, pt. 2
Low 1
Arm Vibrato
Finger Strength, pt. 3
Key Signatures
Beginning Shifting
Major/Minor Scale Theory
D Minor Scale
2 Octave Major Scales
Sight-Reading Patterns

Draft #2:

2 Octave G Major Scale
High 3
Double Stops, Open Strings
Interval Training
Vibrato
Dynamic Markings, pt. 2
Note ID, pt. 2
Upper Position Development, pt. 2
Low 1
Arm Vibrato
Finger Strength, pt. 3
Key Signatures
Beginning Shifting
Major/Minor Scale Theory
D Minor Scale
2 Octave Major Scales
Sight-Reading Patterns
4th Finger

Draft #3:

Warm-Up Routine
Note ID, pt. 2
Bow Articulations
High 3
Sounding Point
Interval Training, pt. 1
Dynamic Markings, pt. 1
Double Stops, Open Strings
Low 1
Major/Minor Scale Theory
Finger Strength, pt. 3
4th Finger
Upper Position Development, pt. 2
Key Signatures
Beginning Shifting

Draft #4

Warm-Up Routine
Note ID, pt. 2
Bow Articulations
High 3
Sounding Point
Interval Training, pt. 1
Dynamic Markings, pt. 2
Double Stops, Open Strings
Low 1
Major/Minor Scale Theory
Finger Strength, pt. 3
4th Finger
Upper Position Development, pt. 2
Key Signatures
Beginning Shifting
F, B-flat, E-flat Major Scale
One Octave Arpeggios

Level Four – Gray: Advanced Intermediate

Draft #1:

Intermediate Shifting
Key Signatures, > 2 Sharps/Flats
Interval Training
Third Position
Second Position
Fourth Position
Note ID, pt. 3
Double Stops, 1 Stopped Pitch
2 Octave Major/Minor Scale
Chordal Structures
Musical Terms, pt. 1

Draft #2:

Note ID, pt. 3
Key Signatures > 2 Sharps/Flats
Intermediate Shifting
2 Octave Major/Minor Scales
Third Position
Second Position
Interval Training
One Octave Minor Scale
Double Stops, 1 Stopped Pitch
Fourth Position
Vibrato, pt. 1
Chordal Structures
Musical Terms, pt. 1
Vibrato
Sight-reading Patterns

Draft #3:

Note ID, pt. 3
Key Signatures > 2 Sharps/Flats
Intermediate Shifting
2 Octave Major Scales
Third Position
Second Position
Interval Training
One Octave Minor Scale
Double Stops, 1 Stopped Pitch
Fourth Position
Vibrato, pt. 1
Chordal Structures
Musical Terms, pt. 1
Two Octave Minor Scale

Level Five – Black: Advanced

Draft #1:

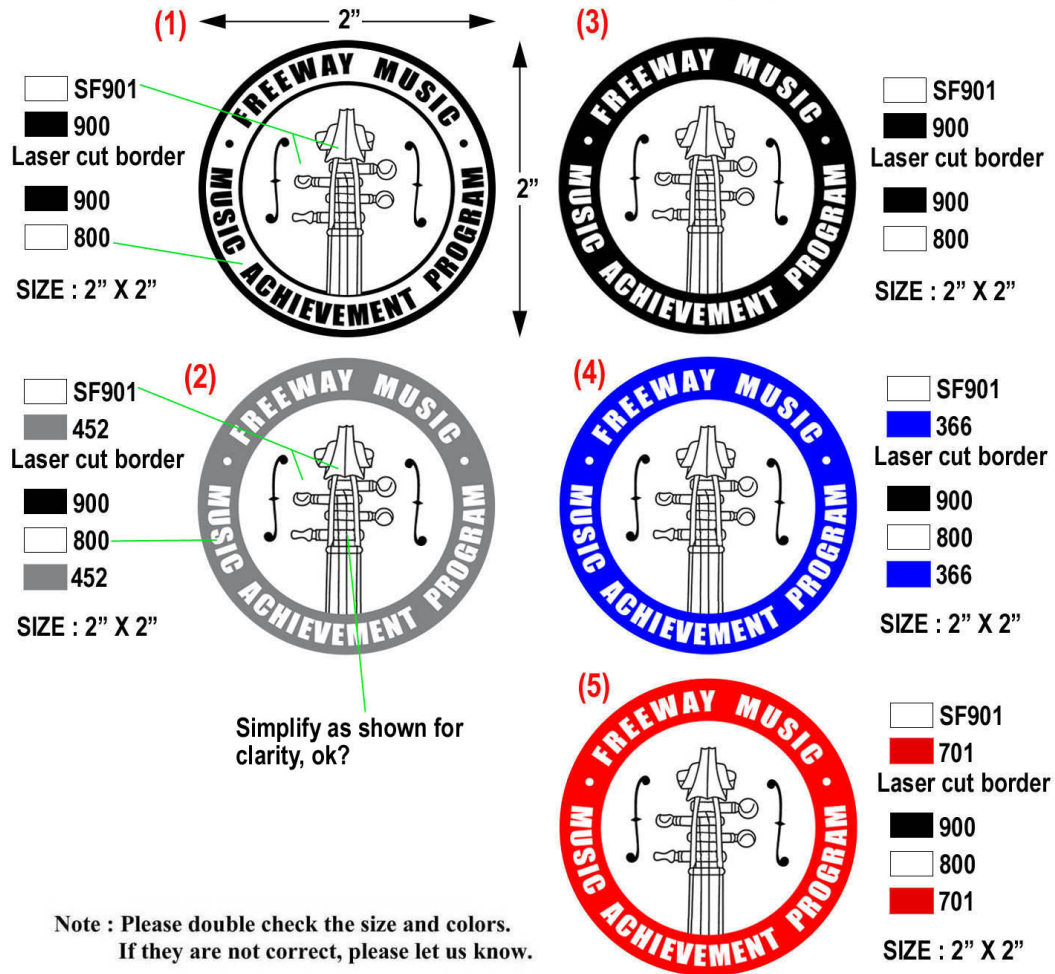
Musical Terms, pt. 2
> 4th Position
Interval Training
Double Stops, 2 Stopped Pitches
3 Octave Major/Minor Scale
3 Octave Arpeggios

Draft #2:

Musical Terms, pt. 2
Advanced Shifting
3 Octave Arpeggios
Interval Training
Double Stops, 2 Stopped Pitches
>Fourth Position
Vibrato, pt. 2
3 Octave Major/Minor Scale
3 Octave Arpeggios

MAP Milestone Patches, Draft

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